

Christians, Political Ideology, and the Preservation of Ordered Liberty

This paper approaches political ideology through the interpretive lens of Christian Principled Fusionism, a term I propose for a differentiated approach that receives truth from conservative, classical liberal, and libertarian traditions while testing each one against the lordship of Jesus Christ, moral truth, constitutional liberty, human dignity, responsible citizenship, and the common good.¹ A fuller statement of this governing lens appears in the addenda.

There is a concern that an increasingly influential form of democratic socialism presents itself not merely as a limited collection of economic reforms but as a comprehensive interpretation of history, identity, power, property, citizenship, education, and social justice. The published platform of the Democratic Socialists of America advocates extensive public programs, public ownership of major energy and transportation infrastructure, a transition away from capitalist control, freer movement across borders, an end to deportations, and immediate amnesty regardless of current immigration status.²

There is also a concern that some political movements use genuine human suffering as an entrance point for remedies that place too much authority in centralized institutions and too little confidence in families, congregations, local communities, private associations, individual responsibility, and constitutional restraints.

These concerns should be examined seriously rather than dismissed as fearmongering.³

Central Claim

At the same time, political urgency does not release Christians from the commandments against false witness, partiality, contempt, and careless accusation (Exod. 20:16; Prov. 18:13, 17; Jas. 2:1–9). Every political ideology must be tested, but democratic socialism presently requires particular scrutiny because of its understanding of power, property, citizenship, identity, and institutional authority. Christians must neither surrender themselves uncritically to political ideologies nor dismiss the people drawn to them with contempt. The church must test every political promise under the lordship of Jesus Christ, affirm what reflects moral truth and human dignity, reject what distorts reality or concentrates power unjustly, and embody a better way

¹ Frank Meyer is closely associated with the development of modern political fusionism. In this paper, I propose the term “Christian Principled Fusionism” for the differentiated framework described here.

² Democratic Socialists of America, “Program,” *DSA Platform*, accessed July 10, 2026; Democratic Socialists of America, “An Economy for the Working Class,” *DSA Platform*, accessed July 10, 2026; Democratic Socialists of America, “Working-Class Foreign Policy,” *DSA Platform*, accessed July 10, 2026.

³ The veteran in me knows that liberty must be defended. The pastor in me knows that liberty must be formed toward truth, holiness, responsibility, gratitude, and love. *That is the heart of the paper.*

through holiness, constitutional responsibility, faithful citizenship, and love of neighbor (Rom. 12:2; 1 Thess. 5:21–22; Col. 2:8).

Throughout history, political movements have often recognized real wounds before offering inadequate remedies. Democratic socialists speak to anxieties about housing, medical costs, educational debt, insecure employment, concentrated economic influence, and the vulnerability of working families.⁴ Christians should not mock those concerns, because Scripture repeatedly commands God’s people to hear the cry of the poor, protect the vulnerable, honor honest labor, and refuse to use wealth as an instrument of oppression (Deut. 15:7–11; Prov. 14:31; Isa. 10:1–2; Jas. 5:1–6).

Yet no economic or political system can redeem humanity. The deepest human problem is not merely an improper distribution of resources but sin working through hearts, appetites, institutions, markets, governments, and concentrations of power (Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:20–23; Rom. 3:23).

Capitalism cannot save us.
Socialism cannot sanctify us.
Libertarianism cannot reconcile us.
Nationalism cannot make us holy.
Government cannot establish the kingdom of God.

The Christian response must therefore be more discerning than partisan acceptance, more courageous than bland moderation, and more charitable than political condemnation.

Discussion Point One

What Is the Nature of the Concern?

Contemporary democratic socialism brings expanded governmental benefits, greater public control of industries, redistributive taxation, identity-based remedies, environmental restructuring, diminished immigration enforcement, and skepticism toward traditional institutions into a unified political vision.⁵

Some of those descriptions correspond directly with published democratic-socialist positions. Others are predictions about the possible consequences of those positions for property, citizenship, markets, religious institutions, education, and constitutional government.

Christian discernment requires us to distinguish among three matters:

⁴ Democratic Socialists of America, “Program.” The program presents universal health care, housing, education, labor power, family support, and environmental restructuring as responses to economic inequality and working-class insecurity.

⁵ Democratic Socialists of America, “Program”; Democratic Socialists of America, “An Economy for the Working Class”; Democratic Socialists of America, “Working-Class Foreign Policy.”

1. What a movement officially declares.
2. What particular advocates have said or done.
3. What opponents believe the movement will eventually produce.

These categories may overlap, but they are not identical.

We must not assign every extreme statement made by one activist to everyone who shares a broader political identity (Exod. 20:16; Eph. 4:25). Neither should we become naïve about the direction of a movement merely because its farthest-reaching ambitions are expressed in compassionate language.

Political programs must be judged not only by their stated intentions but also by their understanding of human nature, the authority they require, the freedoms they restrict, the incentives they create, and the institutions they weaken or strengthen (1 Sam. 8:10–18; Prov. 14:12).

When a movement proposes transferring substantial authority from individuals, families, businesses, congregations, and local communities to publicly controlled institutions, Christians should ask what that transfer would mean for stewardship, liberty, property, religious conscience, voluntary association, and local self-government.

Political power may restrain exploitation, but power gathered in the name of justice can itself become coercive and self-protective (Eccl. 4:1; Mark 10:42–45).

Discussion Point Two

God's Economy and the Stewardship of Material Life

The biblical vision of material life is best understood within **God's economy**—the divine *oikonomia* through which creation, stewardship, redemption, and the common good are ordered under the lordship of Christ.

The Greek word *oikonomia* refers to household management, administration, arrangement, or an entrusted stewardship. In the New Testament, it can describe both a responsibility entrusted to a servant and God's unfolding administration of redemption (Luke 16:2–4; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:9–10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25).⁶

God's economy begins with the declaration that the earth belongs to the Lord rather than ultimately to the state, the corporation, the market, or the individual (Ps. 24:1).

⁶ Walter Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “οἰκονομία.”

Human possession is real, but it is always stewardship: Work is good because human beings were created to cultivate, order, protect, and develop what God has made (Gen. 1:26–28; 2:15). Private responsibility is meaningful because people are accountable for what has been entrusted to them (Matt. 25:14–30). Generosity is required because resources are never given solely for private accumulation (Deut. 15:7–11; Luke 12:16–21; 1 Tim. 6:17–19). Justice is necessary because employers, rulers, merchants, and property holders can use economic power to exploit others (Lev. 19:13; Amos 8:4–6; Jas. 5:1–6).

The biblical economy is therefore neither unrestrained individualism nor compulsory collectivism. It affirms property but denies that property is morally absolute (Lev. 25:23). It affirms work but refuses to measure human worth solely by productivity or wages (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 6:26). It affirms generosity but distinguishes willing sharing from coerced economic sameness, while recognizing that lawful public authority may collect taxes for legitimate public responsibilities (Acts 5:4; Rom. 13:6–7; 2 Cor. 9:7). It affirms public authority but warns that rulers can consume the resources, labor, property, and liberty of the people they claim to protect (1 Sam. 8:10–18). It affirms concern for the poor but does not romanticize dependency, idleness, disorder, or the abandonment of personal responsibility (Prov. 6:6–11; 2 Thess. 3:10–12).

Consequently, *God’s economy joins liberty with stewardship, ownership with accountability, work with dignity, prosperity with generosity, and public order with moral restraint.* The Christian question is not merely, “What may I possess?” It is: “What has God entrusted to me, what duties accompany it, and what kind of household, church, community, and nation will my stewardship help to form?”

Discussion Point Three

Political Speech, Courage, and Contempt

Political commentators sometimes describe their opponents as unproductive, ungrateful, uneducated, naïve, dependent, resentful, or detached from the practical systems through which food, energy, housing, transportation, national defense, and civic order are maintained.

Some criticism may identify genuine cultural patterns. A society cannot endure when increasing numbers of citizens consume its benefits while losing contact with the labor, sacrifice, discipline, productive capacity, and inherited institutions that make those benefits possible.

A veteran understands that liberty is never self-sustaining.

A farmer understands that food does not begin at the grocery store.

A tradesperson understands that physical infrastructure does not arise from slogans.

A business owner understands that wages require productive economic activity.

A pastor understands that communities cannot survive without trust, sacrifice, moral formation, responsibility, and voluntary service.

These realities may be spoken plainly. **This does not require timid speech.** Jesus spoke directly about hypocrisy, exploitation, self-deception, corrupt leadership, and the misuse of

authority (Matt. 23:13–28). The prophets did not soften their language when rulers, merchants, priests, or landowners oppressed the weak (Isa. 10:1–2; Amos 5:10–12).

Yet courage and contempt are not the same thing.

Jesus' severity toward hardened systems does not authorize his disciples to enjoy humiliating their neighbors, invent psychological motives, or reduce entire populations to dismissive labels (Matt. 5:21–22; Luke 6:27–36). James teaches that the tongue cannot faithfully bless God while cursing people made in God's likeness (Jas. 3:9–10). Christians may oppose an ideology forcefully while refusing to despise the people attracted to it.

Some people may be committed socialists. Others may simply be frightened about rent, employment, debt, medical care, family formation, educational costs, or whether they will ever obtain the stability earlier generations expected.

The church should be able to say: "We may not accept the political remedy you have embraced, but we will listen carefully to the wound that made the remedy appear necessary."

Discussion Point Four

Immigration, Citizenship, Assimilation, and Electoral Integrity

Within the responsibilities of civil government is the prudent administration of borders, entry, residency, naturalization, and citizenship, carried out under law and with respect for human dignity (Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–17). Immigration policy therefore involves lawful borders, national sovereignty, public safety, economic capacity, assimilation, citizenship, and the preservation of a coherent civic culture. Scripture's command to love the stranger and neighbor does not require the abolition of borders or the elimination of distinctions among citizens, lawful residents, refugees, temporary visitors, and unlawful entrants. At the same time, Scripture does not permit the stranger to be dehumanized. Israel was commanded to remember its own vulnerability and to treat the foreigner with justice rather than exploitation (Exod. 22:21; Lev. 19:33–34; Deut. 10:17–19).

The church must therefore hold together what political parties frequently separate:

A lawful border and a humane heart.

Secure citizenship and neighborly mercy.

National continuity and respect for the image of God.

The church must also be careful with claims connecting immigrants to unlawful voting. Federal law prohibits noncitizens from voting in federal elections, and recent prosecutions and

convictions demonstrate that violations occur.⁷ These cases are sufficient to establish that noncitizen voting is a legitimate matter of electoral integrity rather than an entirely imaginary concern. Those cases do not, by themselves, establish the total national scale of the problem, prove that unlawful noncitizen voting determines national elections, or demonstrate a centrally directed political-party program.

A related but distinct concern is that political organizations may view immigrant communities and newly naturalized citizens as promising future constituencies and intentionally seek their long-term loyalty. There is nothing improper about seeking the lawful votes of naturalized citizens. They possess the same voting rights as citizens by birth.

The concern arises when leaders appear unwilling to preserve clear distinctions among humanitarian concern, lawful immigration, unlawful entry, residency, naturalization, citizenship, voter eligibility, and partisan recruitment.

The Democratic Socialists of America openly calls for migration without restrictive immigration controls, an end to detention and deportation, immediate amnesty regardless of current immigration status, and access to social services for immigrants.⁸ That position may legitimately be examined for its possible effects upon border sovereignty, national cohesion, public resources, assimilation, and future electoral alignments.

It is reasonable to investigate whether political resistance to border enforcement is sometimes influenced by expectations of future demographic and electoral advantage. Unless direct evidence establishes that motive in a particular case, however, it should be presented as a concern or inference rather than as a proven universal strategy.

A Christian approach to immigration and electoral integrity should hold together:

- Secure borders.
- Lawful and orderly immigration.
- Accurate voter rolls.
- Reliable voter-eligibility and citizenship verification consistent with constitutional protections and reasonably accessible voting procedures.
- Consistent enforcement of election laws.
- Meaningful assimilation into American constitutional life.
- Humane treatment of every person.
- Evidence before accusation.

In all of this, integrity requires both vigilance and restraint (Prov. 12:17; 14:15).

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, “Multiple Aliens Charged with Illegally Voting in Federal Elections and Making False Statements,” May 1, 2026; U.S. Department of Justice, “Three Noncitizens Convicted of Illegal Voting and Related Election Offenses in Federal Elections,” June 22, 2026. Criminal charges remain allegations unless and until guilt is established; the latter source reports guilty pleas.

⁸ Democratic Socialists of America, “Working-Class Foreign Policy.”

Discussion Point Five

Race, Equality, and National Belonging

Certain political ideologies interpret the United States primarily through a permanent binary of oppressors and victims. Within that framework, race, sex, national origin, economic class, or membership in an identity group can become the controlling explanation for guilt, innocence, opportunity, power, and moral authority.

Christians should reject any system that assigns personal guilt or moral worth solely according to ancestry or group identity (Ezek. 18:20; Gal. 3:28). The American constitutional tradition likewise aspires to equal citizenship under law rather than permanent legal classification into competing ancestral groups. Rejecting an absolute oppressor-victim binary does not require denying historical injustice, discrimination, or the enduring consequences of corrupt laws and customs.

Scripture recognizes personal responsibility while also recognizing that injustice can become embedded in courts, economies, governments, and inherited social arrangements (Isa. 10:1–2; Amos 5:12).

The gospel does not call us to erase history. Neither does it permit inherited grievance to become a permanent social identity or a justification for new partiality. Christ puts hostility to death and creates a people whose deepest membership is no longer determined by ethnicity, social status, nationality, or former alienation (Eph. 2:14–19; Col. 3:11).

The Friends' testimony of equality is not a demand that every person possess identical gifts, roles, outcomes, or property. It is the conviction that every human being stands beneath the creative authority of God, bears God-given dignity, and must not be diminished for another person's advantage (Gen. 1:27; Jas. 2:1–9).

Discussion Point Six

Israel, the Jewish People, and the Disguises of Antisemitism

Criticism of a particular policy of the Israeli government is not automatically antisemitic. Governments may be judged, questioned, and held morally accountable. That necessary distinction, however, must not be used to conceal the ways antisemitism sometimes appears beneath the language of anti-Zionism, anti-colonialism, resistance, liberation, or human rights.

There is a valid concern that some political organizations offer verbal opposition to antisemitism while tolerating, excusing, minimizing, or redefining anti-Jewish hostility when it appears within their own coalition. Research into Jewish students' experiences distinguishes ordinary criticism of Israel from rhetoric and conduct that cross into antisemitism according to

their target, context, use of collective blame, employment of historic anti-Jewish tropes, denial of Jewish identity, or application of standards not demanded of other peoples.⁹ The test cannot merely be whether a speaker says, “I oppose antisemitism.” Neither can the test rest solely upon whether a Jewish student experiences criticism as painful; the content, context, target, pattern, and moral standards of the speech must all be examined.

The deeper questions are:

- Are Jewish people treated as a legitimate people rather than as a hidden conspiracy?
- Is Jewish self-determination judged by standards also applied to other peoples?
- Are Jewish students expected to denounce Israel before being accepted in public life?
- Is the word *Zionist* being used as a substitute accusation against Jews generally?
- Are attacks upon Jewish institutions excused as political protest?
- Is the suffering of Jewish civilians minimized because it complicates an ideological narrative?
- Is Israel treated as uniquely illegitimate in ways that are not applied to other nation-states?
- Is antisemitism condemned consistently whether it arises from racial nationalism, the political right, the political left, religious extremism, or revolutionary activism?

Studies conducted after October 7, 2023, documented substantial hostility and anxiety among Jewish students on numerous American campuses. Many students reported concealing their Jewish identity or avoiding discussion of Israel because of the climate around them.¹⁰ These findings do not make every protest against Israeli conduct antisemitic. They do establish that underlying hostility toward Jews cannot be dismissed simply because it is expressed through contemporary political language.

The church must reject antisemitism without qualification (Rom. 11:17–21). It must also remain morally capable of questioning actions by any government, including Israel’s, without transferring judgment from a government to an entire ethnic or religious people.

Christian moral clarity requires us to oppose terrorism, hostage-taking, the intentional targeting of civilians, collective racial hatred, and the use of innocent suffering as political theater (Ps. 82:3–4; Matt. 5:9).

⁹ Graham Wright et al., “Drawing the Line: How U.S. Jewish College Students Think about Antisemitism,” *Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies*, Brandeis University, 2024. The report notes broad agreement among prominent definitions that criticism of Israel is not necessarily antisemitic, while context and particular forms of rhetoric may cause it to cross that line.

¹⁰ Wright, “Jewish Students’ Experiences of Antisemitism at U.S. Colleges,” and “Antisemitism on Campus: Understanding Hostility to Jews and Israel,” *Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies*, Brandeis University, August 2024.

Discussion Point Seven

Higher Education, Ideological Formation, and the Dignity of Learning

There is a legitimate and evidence-supported concern about ideological imbalance within American higher education.

Research consistently finds that left-leaning faculty outnumber right-leaning faculty, although the size of the imbalance varies considerably among institutions, disciplines, and methods of measurement. A 2026 review of studies conducted since 2012 reported ratios ranging from approximately two liberal faculty members for each conservative faculty member to more than eighty to one in particular samples.¹¹ This evidence supports the conclusion that significant portions of American higher education—especially within some humanities and social-science disciplines—lean politically left.

Yet this research does not prove that every university, department, professor, or left-leaning scholar is intentionally indoctrinating students into socialism. Political imbalance does not necessarily produce indoctrination, but it can increase the risk of blind spots, social conformity, restricted inquiry, and the absence of serious internal challenge. The imbalance therefore deserves attention because ideological homogeneity can influence which questions are asked, which subjects are studied, which speakers are welcomed, which assumptions may be challenged, and which political conclusions are treated as signs of intelligence, morality, or compassion.

Ideological imbalance becomes especially dangerous when it narrows:

- Which questions may be asked.
- Which evidence may be considered.
- Which speakers may be heard.
- Which moral assumptions may be challenged.
- Which research subjects appear respectable.
- Which political conclusions are treated as academically acceptable.
- Which students believe they may speak honestly without social or academic punishment.

The concern about indoctrination becomes warranted when an institution moves beyond teaching students about socialism, Marxism, identity politics, critical theory, conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, religious traditions, and competing economic systems and instead presents one ideological framework as the only morally legitimate interpretation of society.

¹¹ Erin Shaw and Shiri Spitz Siddiqi, “How Politically Diverse Are University Faculty?” Heterodox Academy, February 25, 2026. The review reports that studies consistently find more left-leaning than right-leaning faculty but cautions that ratios vary greatly and that simple liberal-to-conservative comparisons may obscure moderate and politically unaffiliated faculty.

When education moves from examining an ideology to forming students within it without meaningful encounter with competing traditions, it ceases to practice education in its fullest sense. Education should help students:

- Seek truth rather than repeat approved language.
- Distinguish evidence from assertion.
- Understand arguments before condemning them.
- Encounter serious conservative, liberal, libertarian, socialist, religious, and secular thought.
- Recognize both the achievements and failures of Western civilization.
- Understand the American constitutional order.
- Develop intellectual and practical competence.
- Prepare for meaningful work and responsible citizenship.
- Exercise freedom of inquiry with moral responsibility.

Higher education should also be judged by whether it equips students to sustain adult life. A degree that requires immense debt but offers little intellectual discipline, practical competence, civic understanding, or realistic vocational preparation deserves scrutiny. That does not mean only technical or immediately profitable disciplines possess value. Human communities need teachers, historians, counselors, pastors, artists, social workers, philosophers, writers, and scholars, as well as farmers, engineers, medical professionals, mechanics, builders, and business owners (Exod. 31:1–6; Rom. 12:4–8). The proper criticism is not that the humanities and social sciences are inherently useless.

The concern is that any discipline becomes diminished when ideological conformity replaces intellectual inquiry, activism replaces scholarship, emotional certainty replaces evidence, and political formation replaces the pursuit of truth.

Christian education should be neither left-wing indoctrination nor right-wing propaganda. It should cultivate wisdom, truthfulness, intellectual courage, vocational responsibility, moral formation, and humble recognition that every human tradition must be tested (Prov. 1:2–7; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21).

Discussion Point Eight

Preserving Western Culture Without Confusing It with the Kingdom

Western culture is not morally innocent, culturally uniform, or identical with Christianity. Its history contains conquest, slavery, religious conflict, racial hierarchy, economic exploitation, political oppression, and failures to honor the very principles it professed.

Western culture also carries an inheritance shaped by biblical faith, Jewish moral teaching, Greek reason, Roman law, Christian theology, natural law, the dignity of the person,

freedom of conscience, constitutional restraint, representative government, scientific inquiry, private association, and reform through public argument.

These goods should not be discarded merely because Western societies have failed to embody them perfectly. A civilization should be corrected according to its highest truths rather than destroyed because it has not always lived up to them.

The gospel does not exist to baptize Western culture. The gospel judges Western culture, exposes its sins, preserves what is true, and calls its institutions toward justice, mercy, truth, ordered liberty, and responsible freedom.

My vocations as veteran and pastor therefore bear related but distinct responsibilities. The veteran serves and protects the constitutional order so that the nation's liberties may endure. The pastor serves the kingdom of God so that people, institutions, and cultures may be brought under the transforming lordship of Jesus Christ. Military service protects a civic space in which conscience, speech, assembly, and worship may remain free. Pastoral service fills that space with the proclamation that freedom reaches its proper end not in self-indulgence but in truth, holiness, service, gratitude, and love (Gal. 5:1, 13–14; 1 Pet. 2:16–17).

The Christian defense of Western culture is therefore not blind nostalgia. It is an act of stewardship. We conserve constitutional liberty because liberty allows conscience to respond to God without human compulsion. We defend ordered government because chaos usually harms the weak before it troubles the powerful. We preserve the rule of law because arbitrary power eventually devours both justice and freedom. We honor the family because human formation begins before the state and reaches deeper than political administration. We defend meaningful property rights because stewardship and responsibility require genuine authority over what has been entrusted. We support voluntary associations because congregations, charities, schools, neighborhoods, families, and civic institutions stand between isolated individuals and centralized power. We welcome honest reform because no human institution is beyond correction. We proclaim the gospel because no civilization can be renewed by political machinery alone.

A Christian Principled Fusionist Response

The danger before the church is not confined to democratic socialism. The deeper danger is allowing any political ideology to tell us whom to fear, whom to blame, whom to despise, which facts may be ignored, and what form of power will save us.

The political left may be tempted to believe that justice can be established primarily by restructuring institutions, redistributing resources, regulating speech, redefining inherited norms, or increasing governmental authority.

The political right may be tempted to believe that national strength, economic growth, border enforcement, military power, cultural recovery, or electoral victory can substitute for repentance and moral formation.

Libertarianism may be tempted to treat freedom from coercion as the highest political good while neglecting the duties without which freedom deteriorates into isolation, appetite, and social fragmentation.

Unprincipled moderation may be tempted to preserve peace by avoiding firm judgment, dividing every difference, and treating compromise as a virtue even when truth requires a clear stand.

As a Christian Principled Fusionist, I reject all four temptations. I am not searching for the midpoint among incompatible claims but for integrated faithfulness rooted in Christ.

1. A Christian Principled Fusionist is conservative when something good, hard-won, and morally necessary must be preserved.
2. A Christian Principled Fusionist is liberal when an institution has betrayed human dignity or failed to honor its own principles and must be reformed.
3. A Christian Principled Fusionist is libertarian when centralized power threatens conscience, speech, worship, property, voluntary association, or personal responsibility.

Above all, a Christian Principled Fusionist is Christian before all three. That allegiance must become visible in the life of the church.

The church should not answer socialism merely by defending capitalism. It should answer the false promises of every ideology by becoming a community in which work is honored, resources are stewarded, generosity is practiced, the poor are remembered, families are strengthened, strangers are treated humanely, truth is spoken, prejudice is confronted, power is restrained, freedom is joined to responsibility, and no person is reduced to economic usefulness or political identity (Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35; Gal. 3:28; Jas. 2:1–9).

We should tell the socialist that justice cannot be created by coercive power alone, and the capitalist that profit cannot be the final measure of the good.

The nationalist must hear that America can never replace Christ as the object of ultimate allegiance, while those who minimize national sovereignty must remember that nations, borders, inherited cultures, and constitutional communities are not meaningless obstacles to be dissolved.

The libertarian must be reminded that freedom creates obligations rather than eliminating them. The revolutionary must face the truth that destruction is easier than civilization and that violence cannot create the peace of Christ. The unprincipled moderate must recognize that refusing to choose can become a choice in favor of whatever power already prevails.

And we must tell ourselves that military service, patriotism, voting, and partisan correctness can never substitute for holiness.

Holiness is not withdrawal from public life. It is life in Christ, by the Spirit, forming a people whose inward surrender becomes visible through obedience, public righteousness, mercy, courage, gratitude, and faithful presence (Rom. 12:1–2; Gal. 5:22–25; 1 Pet. 1:13–16).

The Christian answer is neither fear nor naïveté. It is differentiated faithfulness: preserving what is good, reforming what is unjust, protecting constitutional liberty, and resisting concentrated or arbitrary power (1 Thess. 5:21; Isa. 1:17).

Such faithfulness defends the dignity of every person, honors lawful citizenship while treating the stranger humanely, rejects antisemitism in every political disguise, and seeks to recover education as a disciplined search for truth rather than ideological formation (Gen. 1:27).

It refuses false witness, participates responsibly in public life, and loves even those with whom it disagrees (Exod. 20:16; Jer. 29:7; Matt. 5:44). Above all, it remembers that Jesus Christ—not a party, market, state, movement, university, military, nation, or civilization—is Lord (Phil. 2:9–11).

The church's strongest answer to a false political gospel is not panic. It is a holy and differentiated people whose life together demonstrates that ordered liberty, moral responsibility, human dignity, truth, mercy, and faithful presence belong together under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Concluding Query

Are we preserving the liberties entrusted to us while submitting those liberties to the lordship of Christ, or are we allowing political fear, ideological conformity, and cultural resentment to form us into people who can defend a nation but no longer demonstrate the kingdom of God?

Addendum A: The Author's Governing Lens

I approach public life as an American veteran, a Friends pastor, and what I call a Christian Principled Fusionist, as defined in Addendum B. This is not the perspective of a detached political commentator. My military service was given to the defense of constitutional liberty and the continuity of the American experiment, while my pastoral calling is governed by a first allegiance to Jesus Christ and directed toward the kingdom of God.

The best inheritance of Western culture—ordered liberty, freedom of conscience, constitutional government, moral responsibility, the dignity of the person, and the rule of law—should be preserved, corrected where necessary, and renewed through the gospel. That does not require pretending America is the kingdom of God. It means recognizing that some political and cultural arrangements are more compatible than others with human dignity, religious liberty, responsible citizenship, and the church's freedom to proclaim the gospel.

My military service taught me that the American way of life did not appear accidentally and cannot be sustained carelessly. Constitutional liberty, equal protection under law, freedom of conscience, the peaceful transfer of authority, and the right to speak, assemble, worship, and participate in public life are inherited goods that must be defended, practiced, and passed to the next generation. My service to the kingdom of God has taught me that liberty must be directed toward truth, holiness, responsibility, gratitude, and love.

My pastoral calling reminds me that America is not the kingdom of God, no political philosophy is the gospel, and no nation may claim the ultimate allegiance that belongs to Jesus Christ alone (John 18:36; Phil. 2:9–11; 3:20).

The veteran in me knows that liberty must be defended. The pastor in me knows that liberty must be formed toward truth, holiness, responsibility, gratitude, and love.

Addendum B: A Definition of Christian Principled Fusionism

A Christian Principled Fusionist is a differentiated citizen who receives truth from conservative, liberal, and libertarian traditions while testing every tradition against the lordship of Jesus Christ, moral truth, constitutional liberty, human dignity, responsible citizenship, and the common good.

- From conservatism, I receive respect for inherited wisdom, moral order, family, responsibility, national continuity, stable institutions, and the preservation of goods that previous generations sacrificed to establish.
- From classical liberalism, I receive concern for individual dignity, civil equality, freedom of thought, protection of minorities, and the reform of institutions that fail to honor their own principles.

- From libertarianism, I receive a necessary suspicion of concentrated power, a defense of personal liberty and private conscience, respect for voluntary association, and the conviction that government must remain limited by law.

None of these traditions is sufficient by itself:

Conservatism can preserve what is good, but it can also defend arrangements that require reform. Liberalism can recognize genuine exclusion and injustice, but it can also lose confidence in inherited moral boundaries and place excessive trust in governmental administration. Libertarianism can protect freedom against coercion, but it can also underestimate the obligations that bind families, neighbors, communities, and generations together.

The Christian Principled Fusionist does not occupy an empty political middle. He stands at a moral and theological center from which every political tradition is tested.

He asks:

- What must be conserved?
- What must be corrected?
- What liberty must be protected?
- What responsibility must be expected?
- What power must be restrained?
- What human dignity must be defended?
- What serves the true common good?

This is differentiation rather than indecision. It is the capacity to remain faithfully present within political and cultural conflict without allowing the anxiety of a party, movement, leader, institution, or crowd to become the governing center of one's conscience.

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